



The Beacon



By and for emergency responders

LEPCS: THE CORNERSTONE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) are critical to the success of community right-to-know and play a vital role in helping the public, emergency responders, and others understand chemical information, other environmental data, and what to do if an accident occurs.

Since 1986, the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act has required every community to develop an emergency plan that prepares for accidental releases of extremely hazardous substances, and should one occur, makes provisions for rapid responses to protect the community. Providing access to accurate, timely, and integrated compliance and enforcement data empowers the public to play a role in ensuring compliance with environmental laws.

Local committee members include local elected officials; law enforcement, civil defense, fire service, first aid, health, and local environmental and transportation agency employees; hospital staff; broadcast and print media journalists; community activists; and industry representatives. Because LEPC members represent the community, they are familiar with factors that affect public safety, the environment, and the local economy.

The LEPC also receives emergency release notifications and the annual hazardous chemical inventory information submitted by local facilities that is available to the public upon request. Facilities covered by the Environmental Protection Agency's Risk Management Program coordinate their on-site emergency response plans with the LEPCs. Local planning committees have increasingly become a source of information about chemical risks in the community. LEPCs are working with industry and the public to encourage continuous attention to chemical safety and accident prevention.

Working With Industry

As companies work more closely with LEPCs, they often find that the LEPC organization is the best group to turn to when they need to understand community concerns and need help in providing constructive answers to questions from the public. LEPC involvement creates a process through which people, who otherwise might be mistrustful or even adversarial, can work together to understand and prepare for the chemical risks in the community.

LEPC plans are based on local information reported by local industries; are reviewed annually, exercised, and updated; and enable the LEPC to conduct a community hazard analysis, identify types and location of chemical hazards, vulnerable areas and populations, and the risk of accidents and their effects on the community.

Facing New Challenges

Recent incidents, such as the deliberate chemical release in Tokyo, Japan, of the highly toxic chemical gas Sarin have highlighted the need to ensure that the local emergency response plans consider this possibility, however slight it may be. Many LEPCs already have incorporated planning and response to deliberate WMD releases that are the hallmark of terrorist incidents. Many LEPCs have enlarged their scope of operation to include weapons of mass destruction. This is a natural evolution of the LEPCs community contingency response plan. By 2003, EPA expects 50 percent of the 4,000 LEPCs will have incorporated planning and response to deliberate releases by terrorists into their emergency plans.

During the last decade, LEPCs have continued to expand their role and tackle new duties. Today they act as the intermediary between the public and industry, provide guidance to communities on what steps to take during a chemical emergency, and evaluate facility commitments to reduce chemical accidents and ensure these pledges are met.

How Do I Find Out More?

The EPA Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention Office has published guidance that describes LEPC duties, challenges, and success stories in more detail. Visit the CEPPPO website to learn more about LEPCs and how they can benefit your organization at <http://www.epa.gov/ceppo> or call the EPCRA Hotline at (800) 424-9346 or (703) 412-9810 for more information.

NDPO HOLDS CHAT SESSION ON THE CCL

On February 7th, the NDPO held a chat session, on Law Enforcement Online, that focused on the Common Communication Link (CCL). Participants included members of the emergency response community and the NDPO

staff. The following points were made during the chat session:

- The idea behind the CCL is the creation of a shared system used by law enforcement, health, military, fire, and emergency management services responding to WMD incidents.
- The key to the system, which is hosted by the Law Enforcement Online (LEO) network, is a design that is both user friendly and practical for the state and local responder.
- The LEO system is currently being enhanced to allow full Internet connectivity, which will allow greater accessibility from the workplace.
- The CCL provides both communication tools and information resources.

Communication Tools

- The e-mail system provides a common address for all registered users.
- The CCL provides computer-based conferencing (chat) and hopefully will empower the community to use the system for domestic preparedness purposes
- The CCL will also enable a community with surplussed equipment to list that equipment on an electronic "trading board."
- The CCL provides newsgroups where firefighters, law enforcement officers, etc. can discuss response protocols and upload photos of devices in a newsgroup.

Information Resources

- The CCL is designed to be a hub and will allow users access to partnered websites hosted by medical, fire, emergency management, and law enforcement agencies.
- The CCL contains a multimedia library with speeches, research documents, and databases available to all registered users.
- In the exercise section, the NDPO has WINJIIP available for download. WINJIIP is a lesson-learned database. It is helpful in learning from others' experiences.
- Other information tools will include Beacon articles as well as periodicals provided by the community, special bulletins, databases and links from partner agencies and universities.

- The goal of the CCL is to provide the most accurate and timely information related to WMD issues and useful to your communities for preparedness that we can find.

Future Plans

- The CCL will include state/federal plans online. For Example, if a state is having difficulty developing a plan, they can look at examples online.
- The system will also provide distance learning modules - and the Visual Purple/FBI Angel Five interactive table top simulation will be on the system.
- The NDPO is in the process of developing partnerships with other federal agencies and universities to offer their training courses via LEO.
- The NDPO is also planning on developing a wireless bulletin system to notify LEO users about new NDPO Special Bulletins.
- One helpful feature of the CCL will be a specific search engine for WMD issues.
- The CCL baseline site is up now, we are consistently adding new content; many of the communication features (e-mail, chat) are in place. The info resources will be added as they are developed with distance learning module Angel 5 planned for spring, Internet connectivity for spring 2000, and partner links for summer 2000.

NDPO CHAT SET FOR MARCH

The next NDPO chat session, on Law Enforcement Online (LEO), will be Wednesday, March 29th at 2 p.m. EST. This session will give the response community an opportunity to chat with NDPO Director, Thomas M. Kuker about NDPO projects, initiatives, and future direction.

HOT OFF THE PRESS! ON-SCENE COMMANDER'S GUIDE

The NDPO recently received the printed copies of the *On-Scene Commander's Guide for Responding to Biological/Chemical Threats*, dated 11/1/99. The guides will be disseminated to the emergency response community and a

copy is currently available as a downloadable document on the NDPO's Common Communication Link.

The guide is a tool designed to assist commanders in the field with assessing options during the first two hours of an incident involving a potential biological or chemical agent. The document is intended to augment existing response policies and not supersede local protocols. The guide is general in nature and not intended to be a technical guide for emergency responders. The booklet has dual applicability in the law enforcement and public safety communities.

The NDPO would like to thank the following organizations for their valuable help with the guide: American College of Emergency Physicians, DHHS: Office of Emergency Preparedness, DHHS: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Justice, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Hilderbrand and Noll Associates, International Association of Chiefs of Police, International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Fire Protection Association, National Interagency Civil-Military Institute, National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, National Sheriffs Association, National Volunteer Fire Council, Prince George's County Fire/EMS, Maryland, Sacramento Fire Department, US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases, and the Virginia Department of Emergency Services.

OJP/OSLDPS DOMESTIC PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOPS

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Office for State and Local Domestic Preparedness Support (OSLDPS) announced that letters have been sent to the State Administrative Agencies (SAA) on the March 3, 2000 for the OSLDPS Strategic Planning Regional Conferences. In order to assist states with the Fiscal Year 1999 State Domestic

Preparedness Support Program Guidelines and Application Kit, OSLDPS will convene five (5) regional conferences during the months of March and April. These conferences will provide a forum to work directly with each of the state agencies and discuss the conduct of the assessments, the preparation of the strategies, data submissions to OSLDPS, and the use of the compiled information. The gubernatorial selected agencies will receive the Needs Assessment and Strategy Development Tool Kit in advance of the first conference. OSLDPS is suggesting to the states that they send representatives from public health, emergency management and law enforcement as well as individuals familiar with grant administration and training and equipment issues.

All travel, lodging and per diem expenses will be paid from the planning funds available from OSLDPS under the Fiscal Year 1999 awards. In the event that states do not receive their FY 1999 award prior to attending the conference, states will be provided pre-agreement cost approval for expenses relating to attending these conferences.

The following list provides the dates and locations for each conference and identifies the sessions for which each state is requested to participate. For more information on this or any other aspect of the OSLDPS domestic preparedness initiatives, please contact Scott Kelberg at (202) 324-9034 or the OSLDPS offices directly at (202) 305-9887.

OJP/OSLDPS Domestic Preparedness Workshop Locations and Hotels

Region I

Location/Dates

Philadelphia, PA
March 28-29, 2000

Hotel

Philadelphia Renaissance Airport Hotel
500 Stevens Drive
Philadelphia, PA 19083

(610) 521-5900
Fax: (610) 521-4362
Rate: \$118

Region I includes: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware

Region II

Location/Dates

Atlanta, GA
April 4-5, 2000

Hotel

Westin Atlanta Airport
4736 Best Road
Atlanta, GA 30337
(404) 762-7676
Fax: (404) 559-3994
Rate: \$93

Region II includes: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia

Region III

Location/Dates

Chicago, IL
April 10-11, 2000

Hotel

Holiday Inn O'Hare
5440 North River Road
Rosemont, IL 60018
(847) 671-6350
Fax: (847) 671-5406
Rate: \$130

Region III includes: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota

Region IV

Location/Dates

St. Louis, MO
April 13-14, 2000

Hotel

Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel
9801 Natural Bridge Road
St. Louis, MO 63134
(314) 429-1100
Fax: (314) 429-3625
Rate: \$69

Region IV includes: Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas

Region V

Location/Dates

San Diego, CA
April 18-19, 2000

Hotel

Hilton San Diego Airport Hotel
1960 Harbor Island Drive
San Diego, CA 92102
(619) 291-6700
Fax: (619) 293-0694
Rate: \$96

Region V includes: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming

**TECHNOLOGIES FOR PUBLIC
SAFETY IN CRITICAL
INCIDENT RESPONSE
CONFERENCE SET FOR JUNE**

The Office of Science and Technology, National Institutes of Justice, will be presenting the Technologies for Public Safety in Critical Incident Response Conference 2000 in Denver, Colorado from June 7th through the 10th.

This conference will bring together law enforcement, fire, EMS, and other first responders to exchange information, see the latest tools and technologies available for

incident response and management; and hear their peers and experts relate valuable insights on using technology to respond to threats to public safety.

The conference will include plenary and breakout sessions, as well as an Exhibition Hall with over 60 booths displaying state-of-the-art technology solutions for first responders; a demonstration of public safety incident response vehicles from around the country; and federally sponsored technology demonstration rooms.

The conference is co-sponsored by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, FEMA's US Fire Administration, Office of Intelligence and Security, US Department of Transportation, National Domestic Preparedness Office, Office for State and Local Domestic Preparedness Support, and the Technical Support Working Group.

For more information, please visit the conference website at www.nlectc.org, or call Lisa Hecker, Conference Manager, at 703-625-1489.

NDMS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

This year's National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) Conference, entitled "Catastrophic Care for the Nation" will be held at the Alexis Park Hotel in Las Vegas from April 29th to May 3rd, 2000. NDMS is a public/private partnership represented federally by the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services and Veterans Affairs and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Conference programs will cover a variety of topics from domestic preparedness for weapons of mass destruction to discussing communications issues, recent earthquake responses and disaster medicine topics. For more information, please visit the NDMS website at www.oep-ndms.dhhs.gov.

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR THE NDPO? USE THE ELECTRONIC HELPLINE

The NDPO has established an electronic helpline at ndpo@leo.gov. This service was initiated to build a responsive communications link between the NDPO and the emergency response community. Stakeholders are invited to use the address to ask questions pertaining to WMD preparedness issues such as training, planning, exercises, equipment, information sharing, and health and medical matters. Your questions will be answered by NDPO personnel, or subject matter experts in a timely manner. When using this new system, please provide your full name, agency, and telephone number.

THE BEACON STAFF WELCOMES YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

Do you have an idea for an article on domestic preparedness? Is your community working on a new WMD preparedness project? Why don't you share your thoughts and experiences with the rest of the emergency response community? *The Beacon* staff is dedicated to publishing useful and relevant information for the public safety sector. We welcome articles relating to all facets of WMD preparedness, including training, planning, exercises, equipment, health and medical, and information sharing. We also welcome suggestions on improving the newsletter.

If you wish to contribute to *The Beacon*, please contact a member of the staff at the telephone number listed below.

**National Domestic Preparedness Office
Thomas M. Kuker, Director
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Washington, D.C. 20535
202-324-9025, fax: 202-324-2224**

***The Beacon* is published monthly for members of the emergency response community. Please send articles, comments, feedback, and letters to the Information Sharing Team at the address listed above.**